

PART 306-3--Administrative Requirements

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306-3.1 Who processes foreign travel packages for NOAA?

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) processes all NMFS foreign travel packages and the NOAA Travel Office (NTO) processes all other foreign travel packages.

306-3.2 What is a “complete” foreign travel package?

A complete foreign travel package consists of:

- 1) an approved original and one photocopy of the travel order with a travel order number assigned by the Line/Staff Office. The employee’s grade and date of birth must be annotated in the remarks section of the travel order;
- 2) a signed copy of the “Defensive Travel Briefing Acknowledgment Statement;” and
- 3) passport forms, passports, pictures, visa applications, and letters of invitation could be included depending on country requirements.

Please note: Your Line or Staff Office may have other internal requirements.

See NTR, Chapter 306-7.1 for a blank foreign travel checklist.

306-3.3 Is a “Defensive Travel Briefing” required for foreign travel?

Yes. “Defensive Travel Briefings” are required for all employees including invitational travelers on foreign travel. The “Defensive Travel Briefing” consists of an information handout and a “Defensive Travel Briefing Acknowledgment Statement.” The information handout must be read and the statement must be signed, dated, and submitted to the NTO annually. The statement confirms that the traveler has read the information handout. Foreign travel packages without a signed statement will not be processed.

See NTR, Chapter 306-7.2 for a “Defensive Travel Briefing.”

306-3.4 What will help ensure my safety as a Government employee traveling on official business?

- 1) Sign the official passport immediately upon receipt.
- 2) Renew passports 6 months before they expire.
- 3) Obtain visas for any in-transit travel.
- 4) Ensure that country clearance cables are processed by your Line Office’s servicing International Activities Office or by your Staff Office.

306-3.5 How can I help ensure foreign travel packages will be processed in time for my travel?

To provide adequate lead-time to process foreign travel packages, the following procedures should be followed:

- 1) Plan ahead - Determine well ahead of travel dates which staff members will need foreign travel orders, annual briefings, and passports. Predetermine which countries require visas. All visa applications, except those for Australia and Oman, can be faxed upon request from the NTO. For quicker visa service, frequent travelers should keep extra pictures on hand.
- 2) Act promptly - Allow the proper lead-time necessary to obtain visas and passports. For situations where there is not enough lead-time, an advance unsigned copy of the travel order can be sent to the NTO followed by a signed copy. Submit separate documents for each traveler. Provide the NTO with an office contact name and phone number.

306-3.6 What are the lead-time requirements for processing foreign travel packages that do not require visas or passports?

Four-weeks lead-time is required for foreign travel packages that do not require visas or passports. *See NTR, Chapter 306-4.5, 306-5.2, and 306-6.2 for specific lead-time requirements.*

306-3.7 Does NOAA obtain official passports and visas for invitational travelers on foreign travel?

No. NOAA is not responsible for official passports and visas for invitational travelers on foreign travel. Invitational travelers are expected to obtain personal passports and visas. However, NOAA will reimburse passport and visa fees for invitational travelers on foreign travel when approved on the travel order.

306-3.8 What do I submit to the NTO for an invitational traveler on foreign travel?

You will submit an approved travel order with the following statement annotated in the remarks section of the travel order: “The individual named above is traveling at the invitation of the U.S. Government. Although not a formal representative of the U.S. Government, this individual is considered of sufficient character and qualification to participate on this mission.” A “Defensive Travel Briefing Acknowledgment Statement” must also be included.

306-3.9 How does the NTO process a foreign travel package?

The NTO will hold the approved travel order until **all** of the necessary documents have been received and processed. A complete foreign travel package includes the original approved travel order, the official passport, and visa(s), if necessary. When all of the documents have been processed, the NTO will forward the complete foreign travel package to the travel contact. Upon receipt of the complete foreign travel package, the travel contact and the traveler should review all documents for completion and accuracy.